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# Security Council

Sixty-fifth year

*Provisional*

## 6288th meeting

Friday, 19 March 2010, 3.45 p.m.
New York

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| *President:* | Mr. Moungara Moussotsi | (Gabon) |
| *Members:* | Austria | Mr. Lutterotti |
| | Bosnia and Herzegovina | Mr. Vukašinović |
| | Brazil | Mr. Moretti |
| | China | Mr. Du Xiaocong |
| | France | Mr. Bonne |
| | Japan | Ms. Shiotsu |
| | Lebanon | Ms. Ziade |
| | Mexico | Mr. Puente |
| | Nigeria | Mr. Adamu |
| | Russian Federation | Mr. Kravchenko |
| | Turkey | Ms. Dinç |
| | Uganda | Mr. Mugoya |
| | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | Mr. Quarrey |
| | United States of America | Mr. Gordon |

## Agenda

Central African region

Impact of illicit arms trafficking on peace and security

Letter dated 15 March 2010 from the Permanent Representative of Gabon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2010/143)

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*The meeting resumed at 3.45 p.m.*

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I wish to remind all speakers, as I indicated this morning, that they are asked to limit their statements to a maximum of five minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously.

I now give the floor to the representative of Germany.

**Mr. Wittig** (Germany): I should like to thank you, Mr. President, for giving my country the opportunity to participate in this important debate.

Germany fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the European Union.

Every day, hundreds of people suffer from the consequences of the proliferation of illicit arms. Implications for economic development are obvious. Illicit arms trafficking is all too often one of the causes of humanitarian tragedies.

Germany has long been committed to a comprehensive approach to combat the destabilizing accumulation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons, as well as their ammunition. My country attaches high importance to fully implementing and further developing the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. It supports the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States in New York in June 2010, which will mark an important step in the implementation of the Programme of Action.

For more than 10 years, Germany has chaired the so-called Group of Interested States in New York. This Group has offered a platform to the disarmament community based in New York to exchange views on how to cope with the scourge of small arms and light weapons.

In recent years, my country has paid particular attention to the issue of the security and thorough management of national stockpiles of conventional arms and ammunition. Under German chairmanship, a group of governmental experts drew up recommendations on the proper management of stockpiles. My Government is contributing to the ongoing United Nations-steered process leading to the development of technical guidelines for the management of stockpiles of conventional ammunition.

My country remains committed to reducing and ultimately ending the illegal global trade in small arms and light weapons. Therefore we continue to attach the utmost importance to the ongoing process towards the development of a comprehensive and legally binding arms trade treaty on the highest possible common international standards for the transfer of conventional arms. We stand ready to engage actively and to cooperate constructively in the process leading to the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty in 2012.

I should like to provide a few examples of my country's cooperation. In 2006, my Government began to support the East African Community (EAC) by implementing a project on non-proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the EAC. As a result, networks were created that paved the way for the engagement of the EAC in maintaining peace and security. The EAC has worked closely with the Regional Centre for Small Arms and Light Weapons, based in Nairobi, thus reaching out to countries in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa.

The African Union (AU) has been mandated by its member States to establish an African Peace and Security Architecture. Germany is assisting the Peace and Security Department of the African Union Commission in setting up the African Peace and Security Architecture.

One of the priority areas of cooperation in Africa is the establishment of a continental early warning system. The system will enable the Peace and Security Council of the African Union to identify the rise of a potential crisis scenario. My Government is assisting the AU in designing such an early warning system. It is also supporting the development of the police component of the African Standby Force. The project aims at providing a minimum level of civilian security in fragile post-conflict situations and at raising public confidence in the security forces.

That leads me to my last point. From the very start, Germany has supported the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). By helping societies emerging from conflict and laying the foundations for sustainable peace and development, the PBC is entrusted with a crucial contribution to international peace and security. It should therefore play a central role in fostering cohesion among political, security, development and humanitarian

actors. In that context, my Government is of the view that the PBC should strive for close cooperation with the United Nations Security Council to focus on small arms trafficking and to curb the harmful effects of these weapons.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I give the floor to the representative of Switzerland.

**Mrs. Grau** (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Mr. President, for having organized this important debate.

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons arising from their illicit trade has devastating effects on peace, security and development in Central Africa, both in countries in conflict and in those at peace. In that region, Switzerland has long cooperated with Burundi. Our commitment is currently being furthered through our chairmanship of the country-specific configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission for that country. My statement will be based on our experience in the context of our activities in Burundi. I will address five points.

First, the regulation of the trade in small arms and light weapons illicit by international instruments at the global, regional and subregional levels plays an indispensable role in the fight against the proliferation of such weapons. We strongly encourage all Member States to implement and strengthen these instruments. In this respect, the negotiation of a comprehensive and legally binding arms trade treaty would represent a great step forward.

Secondly, among our priorities is the effective implementation of existing instruments relating to small arms and light weapons, such as the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument. The Fourth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action at the national, regional and global levels will be an excellent occasion for Member States to step up their efforts.

Thirdly, arms collection campaigns have proven to be useful. However, buy-back programmes risk being counterproductive if they do not reduce demand. They may actually stimulate demand if the reward is greater than the going price for a weapon. Such initiatives should also extend to ammunition and explosives and provide for the immediate destruction of the equipment retrieved. Finally, all States must make every possible effort to respect the rule of law, ensure security for all their communities without discrimination of any kind, and complement civilian weapons collection programmes with confidence-building measures.

Fourthly, it will not be enough to address the supply in light weapons if we want to achieve sustainable improvements in the security situation in regions that are particularly affected by armed violence. We underscore the need to intervene on the demand side as well — that is, to take a comprehensive approach to the problem of armed violence.

Finally, in the Secretary-General's recent report (A/64/228) on promoting development through the reduction and prevention of armed violence, the Secretary-General calls for increased international efforts to prevent and reduce armed violence. He makes several very useful recommendations. He also welcomes the efforts undertaken in the framework of the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development, a diplomatic initiative launched jointly by Switzerland and the United Nations Development Programme in 2006 and signed by 108 countries to date. That process supports Governments and civil society in achieving measurable reductions in armed violence, both in conflict and non-conflict settings, by 2015. We invite all countries that have not yet done so to sign that instrument and to participate actively in the process at the regional and global levels.

I underscore once again the importance of Member States and international organizations taking a coherent, coordinated and complementary approach to the fight against armed violence in Central Africa by dealing with both the demand and the supply sides of the issue.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Congo.

**Mr. Maboundou** (Congo) (*spoke in French*): I would like first to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption to the presidency of the Council, and to thank you for having organized this debate on an issue of great relevance to the Central African subregion, the rest of Africa and other regions of the world affected by conflicts and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

In 2008, it was estimated that there were already 870 million firearms in circulation around the world, causing on average 740,000 deaths per year. Even in

areas free from conflict, they continue to sow death and devastation. Small arms and light weapons are easily absorbed into illegal trafficking networks. They are widely used in armed conflicts and foster cross-border crime.

For over three decades now, illegal trafficking in small arms and light weapons has fed conflicts and their corresponding phenomenon, cross-border crime, in Central Africa. The subregion has been particularly hard hit by the many armed conflicts that have damaged the stability of States and destroyed their socio-economic fabric. Many such States are in post-conflict situations, while others are undertaking reconstruction and the revival of their development processes.

The persistent tensions in the subregion provide fertile soil for the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, which, alongside organized crime, severely destabilizes our States and poses a serious threat to the peace and security of the subregion and to overall international peace and security.

Furthermore, the process of economic integration on which our development strategies depend has been hindered and could even be held up entirely. Indeed, the illicit circulation and proliferation of small arms and light weapons are a destabilizing factor. They promote armed violence and prolong armed conflicts. They also promote the illegal exploitation of natural resources, illicit drug trafficking, the recruitment of child soldiers, sexual violence and other human rights violations, such as illicit trafficking in children.

The unremitting armed violence and insecurity resulting from this harmful traffic have weakened the economies of most States in Central Africa, which must also face the challenge of implementing programmes for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants. The recurrence of armed violence arising from the proliferation of light weapons in border areas, roadblocks and acts of piracy displace entire populations, making them more vulnerable and their situation more precarious. The current situation in the northern part of my country is a vivid illustration of this point.

Here, my delegation would like to reiterate its appeal for assistance for our brothers from the Democratic Republic of the Congo who have fled the hostilities there and taken refuge in the Republic of the Congo. We would also like to take this opportunity to echo the United Nations appeal for funds to relieve the suffering of the victims of armed attacks in Equateur province.

The States of the subregion have committed themselves to combating this scourge in the framework of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa. Given what is at stake, they have resolved to coordinate their efforts on a regular basis within the framework of ECCAS, in which they have created a Peace and Security Department, and of the Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa.

These efforts have led to the adoption of several decisions and recommendations. I would highlight in particular the Subregional Conference on the Proliferation of and Illicit Traffic in Small Arms in Central Africa, which was held in October 1999 in N'djamena, Chad, and the meeting held in Brazzaville in May 2003 that led to the adoption of the Programme of Priority Activities for the implementation of the 2001 United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

It is clear that effective control of the scourge of illicit small arms is crucial. It is through the strengthening of subregional, regional and international cooperation that our States will be able to meet the challenge of the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons. This cooperation will have to focus on exchanges of information and experience among States, on the one hand, and between States and international, regional and subregional organizations, on the other. This will be particularly true in terms of assistance being provided for the drawing up of registers of arms, lists of illegal arms brokers, and the provision of equipment and materials for border surveillance and weapons detection.

In this respect, a workshop/seminar on the fight against the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons was held on 10 March in Brazzaville by the Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States. Through this workshop, the Congo obtained an electronic device to trace weapons.

Conflict prevention must also be addressed on a priority basis in order to ensure that non-State actors are unable to acquire such weapons, the destructive

effects of which have proved to be comparable to those of weapons of mass destruction. To that end, we must emphasize rigorous management of arms stockpiles, the destruction of collected illicit weapons and surplus munitions, and disarmament education by involving all national actors, in particular civil society. Furthermore, the submission and regular consideration, in the context of the Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, of national reports on the implementation of the Brazzaville Programme of Priority Activities and the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects is an encouraging exercise that will allow us to take stock of the progress that has been made in the fight against the scourge of arms in Central Africa.

The forthcoming ministerial meeting of the Standing Advisory Committee, to be held in April in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo, will focus exclusively on the consideration of the preliminary draft of a legally binding instrument on the control of small arms and light weapons in Central Africa, which has been drawn up at the request of the Economic Community of Central African States. As a result, my delegation hopes that the Kinshasa meeting will equip Central Africa with an ideal framework for action to better combat the scourge of the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

**Mr. Ileka** (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I should like to discharge the pleasant duty of conveying to you, Sir, my delight at seeing you preside over the Security Council. I am all the more gratified by your presidency as a result of the fact that you represent a country, the Gabonese Republic, with which the Democratic Republic of the Congo has long enjoyed excellent relations marked by mutual esteem and respect.

Allow me also to welcome the presence here of Ms. Migiro, Mr. Costa, Mr. Duarte and Mr. Sylvain-Goma, and to thank them sincerely for their valuable contributions to this debate.

I am from a country, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which, owing to its geographical situation and the breach of international peace and security that it has experienced, unfortunately embodies the tragedy that Central Africa has suffered as a result of the proliferation and illicit circulation of arms, in particular small arms and light weapons, to which former Secretary-General Kofi Annan once referred as African weapons of mass destruction.

Indeed, over the past decade my country has been the theatre of the most murderous war Africa has ever known. The price that has been paid by the Congolese people is unimaginable. The Democratic Republic of the Congo has suffered millions of deaths, millions of lifelong disabilities, millions of internally displaced persons and refugees, massive violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, exponential growth in the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in conflict zones, and especially — and this is of great concern for our future — the sacrifice of an entire young generation that already comprises the majority of our population and will be the Democratic Republic of the Congo of tomorrow.

I wish to spare the Council further litanies. Today, my country is in the process of reconstruction, institutional consolidation and rebuilding the nation. If this process is to be successful, we cannot sufficiently stress the imperative need to strengthen cooperation and partnership at the international level, since the fight against the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons largely transcends Central Africa and extends to the entire continent and, indeed, the entire world.

How can we face this challenge and together travel the road to normalization? In Central Africa, we require peace and stability. We require a peace to keep or build, even through political settlements likely to prevent recourse to violence and therefore the demands of a potential market for arms and ammunition. Our countries seek better cooperation with the United Nations bodies primarily responsible for dealing with small arms and light weapons: the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Peacebuilding Commission, the Office for Disarmament Affairs, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, and the position currently under creation of Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict.

On the ground, we need to rethink and better populate programmes for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; disarmament, demobilization,

reintegration and repatriation or resettlement; disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation or resettlement; and security sector reform. Our States should more firmly address the supply networks for small arms and light weapons through a process of registering, tracing, marking and identifying weapons, with the assistance and support of such organizations as INTERPOL, or through international instruments under United Nations auspices, without prejudice to the relevant provisions of the United Nations Charter, their commitments vis-à-vis other existing international instruments, and of course their national security and interests.

We should also clearly identify the links between the illicit traffic in these weapons and the illegal exploitation of natural and other resources, as well as the illicit traffic in narcotics, and in response develop innovative strategies. Practical cooperation is desirable among the authorities of our States responsible for investigations, the Security Council sanctions committees, peacekeeping missions, and relevant regional and international organizations. To that end, coercive measures should be considered not only against individuals, but also against any State Member of the United Nations that violates arms embargos against conflict zones in our subregion.

The efforts of our States to combat the uncontrolled proliferation of these weapons should be based on the belief that security, development and human rights are all interconnected. Our national plans for combating the proliferation of small arms and light weapons should incorporate peacebuilding efforts, gender equality, strategies for the empowerment of women, broader poverty reduction policies, and concepts of national and human security. Our States should be encouraged to strengthen cooperation aimed at the gathering, storage and exchange of data on small arms and light weapons. Appropriate training and capacity-building policies for the implementation of national arms control and reduction programmes are desirable. The task would be crushing for our States without appropriate international assistance, and it would be difficult for them successfully to implement policies for peace, stability, security and the protection of our young democracies.

To fight the scourge of the illicit traffic in weapons, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has undertaken remedial measures, some of which will become preventive in the future and all of which are aimed at strengthening our capacity to counter the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and to reduce armed violence. My country has thus acquired an institutional framework, inter alia, through the creation of a national commission for the control of small arms and light weapons and the reduction of armed violence. With the assistance of the United Nations system, the European Union and a number of non-governmental organizations, and with the support of certain States, including the United States, Belgium and France, my country has taken myriad legislative measures, bolstered its operational capacities and, finally, undertaken appropriate steps in terms of information exchange and the maintenance of registries on the control, seizure, confiscation and destruction of weapons. By way of illustration, in 2009 our country destroyed over 100,000 weapons and 480 tons of munitions. Furthermore, a weapons-marking operation was launched on 20 February.

I would also briefly like to mention the efforts made in awareness-raising and community disarmament under the aegis of the Government by the Ecumenical Programme for the Transformation of Conflicts and Reconciliation. Moreover, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has signed and ratified all the legal instruments of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) in this field. With regard to Congolese law, as the Council is aware, duly constituted international treaties and agreements take precedence over national law.

I can assure the Council that the States members of ECCAS — which, as its Secretary-General has mentioned, include almost a dozen countries, more than half of which were in conflict situations not long ago — understand perfectly the seriousness of the problem of the illicit traffic in weapons. Our countries are pursuing cooperation in the context of both ECCAS and the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, which was established as a framework for coordination in May 1992 by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

Working in close cooperation with the Department for Disarmament Affairs, as many delegations have mentioned, next month my country will host the Committee's thirty-first ministerial meeting, which will focus almost exclusively on a draft legal instrument on the control small arms and light weapons in Central Africa, their ammunitions and any equipment that might be used in their manufacture.

Having said that, I cannot but express my great satisfaction and gratitude to you, Mr. President, for your timely initiative to convene today's meeting of the Council. I very much hope that it will contribute to sustaining and strengthening the solidarity of the Security Council and the international community with the Central African region with a view to eradicating the illicit traffic in these weapons.

If I may just exceed a bit more the time that has been given to me, I wish to inform the Council that my country will host a regional preparatory meeting in Kinshasa in connection with the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, to be held in New York in June. I should like in advance to thank the delegations that will join us and the Department for Disarmament Affairs in ensuring that the Meeting can take place, thereby underscoring their resolve and commitment to succeed in defeating a traffic that all of us deplore.

In conclusion, I should like to associate myself with all the calls on the international community to provide the Central African region all the assistance requested in effectively coordinating the fight against the illicit traffic in weapons. The commitment of the Security Council is crucial to that end. Our countries have already welcomed the felicitous partnership that has been established between the United Nations and the ECCAS. However, if we wish to work to resolve the problems posed by the illicit traffic in weapons at the national, regional and international levels in order to produce the greatest benefit for our countries and peoples, that partnership deserves to be built upon, and even strengthened, with regard both to the necessary coordination of United Nations efforts and to broader and more effective cooperation with regional organizations.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Republic of Korea.

**Mr. Kim Bonghyun** (Republic of Korea): Allow me, first, to convey my delegation's sincere appreciation to you, Mr. President, for the holding of today's open debate on the impact of illicit trafficking in small arms on peace and security in the Central African region. My delegation believes that today's debate is both timely and relevant, considering the challenges that we face not only in Central Africa but in all corners of the world. I would also like to express our gratitude for the continued interest of the Council on this issue, as well as for the work of the Secretary-General in raising public awareness on this matter by publishing biennial reports, which I believe will be circulated in the near future.

Small arms and light weapons are the weapons of choice in many present-day conflicts. Their widespread availability and excessive accumulation contribute to the prolongation of violence and the aggravation of regional conflicts. Illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons is often closely linked to organized crime, terrorism and drug trafficking. Furthermore, it is also associated with various development, human rights and humanitarian problems, such as child soldiers, refugees, food insecurity and the illegal exploitation of natural resources. Preventing the illicit flow of small arms is key to addressing those multifaceted issues.

We greatly appreciate the efforts being made by the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), especially its work on a legally binding instrument on subregional monitoring of the illicit traffic in small arms, ammunitions and related material. That is not only necessary for the region, but it is also in line with the global trend to regulate the illicit flow of conventional arms. We would also like to commend earlier initiatives by African States, such as the Bamako Declaration, the Nairobi and Southern African Development Community Declarations and Protocols, and the Economic Community of West African States Convention.

My delegation is particularly pleased with the Council's continued interest in addressing the issue of small arms since its first thematic debate in 1999, considering its potential to impede the Council from fulfilling its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. I would especially like to emphasize the importance of ensuring the effectiveness of the Council's arms embargo, not only because of its direct effects in curbing illegal arms transfers but also because of its far-reaching impact on the work of the Council, including its peacekeeping activities.

Also within the framework of the United Nations, in June we will have an opportunity to strengthen our joint efforts to address issues concerning small arms at the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States, as well as to consider the national, regional and global

implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. In that regard, I would like to commend the extensive consultations being undertaken by Mexico as the Chair of the Fourth Meeting. I would also like to reiterate my delegation's full support for the success of the Meeting.

My delegation would also like to point out that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 64/48, the preparatory committee meetings for the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty will start in July 2010, with a view to establishing a legally binding instrument on the highest possible common international standards for the transfer of conventional arms. Considering the grave impact that the illicit traffic in small arms has on peace and security in all regions, including Central Africa, I believe that small arms should fall within the scope of the arms trade treaty.

Among the various aspects concerning illicit trafficking activities, my delegation would like to point out the importance of preventing and combating the illicit brokering of all conventional weapons, including small arms. From that standpoint, the Republic of Korea, together with Australia, introduced in 2008 General Assembly resolution 63/67, entitled "Preventing and combating illicit brokering activities", which was adopted by consensus. Considering its positive implications on international efforts to curb illicit trafficking in small arms, my Government would like to request the continued support of all Member States for that biennial resolution, which will next be introduced at the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Australia.

**Mr. Goledzinowski** (Australia): First of all, I would like to commend you, Mr. President, on your timely initiative to hold this open debate on the impact of illicit small arms trafficking on peace and security in the Central African region.

We all come to this debate with our own regional and geographical perspectives. Some of those speakers who have spoken this afternoon have, of course, demonstrated a much deeper knowledge of the situation in Central Africa than Australia has. I would like to take this opportunity to formally congratulate those States on the specific measures they have listed for us here today. But equally, we all share a common purpose, as reflected in Article 1 of the United Nations Charter, to maintain peace and security, including through taking effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to peace.

The achievement of these goals involves building confidence between nations and developing an effective international security system. In part, this requires concerted international efforts to prevent the excessive accumulation and proliferation of conventional weapons, including the eradication of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

But regional solutions to regional problems are also critical. In this regard, Australia recognizes and commends the efforts being made in Africa to bring about sustainable peace and security. These efforts include the Economic Community of West African States Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials; the Southern African Development Community Protocol on Control of Firearms, Ammunition and Other Related Materials; and the Nairobi Protocol for the Prevention, Control and Reduction of Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa. As my Foreign Minister, Stephen Smith, said just today in a speech at Sydney University, it is difficult to imagine making progress on global issues, including disarmament, without working closely with African countries and the African Union.

In our own region, Australia, in partnership with the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, hosted a Pacific regional meeting last year to further the goals of the United Nations Programme of Action. In doing so, we recognized that national security cannot be achieved in isolation from regional or global security. We also realized the importance that confidence-building and effective collective action among States plays in the pursuit of these goals.

Regional arms control arrangements, including in Africa and the Pacific, are important examples of collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to peace and security. They also underpin, in practical ways, the broader international security framework, including the key United Nations initiatives, such as the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons and the prospective arms

trade treaty, in that they seek to prevent the illicit or irresponsible transfer of arms.

It is in these broader international security frameworks that all Member States can contribute to strengthening cross-regional security. As United Nations Members, we have valuable opportunities this year to build on regional arms control initiatives and to further strengthen international measures. As has been mentioned by speakers before me, the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, and also the first Preparatory Committee meeting on the arms trade treaty, provide us with an opportunity to buttress existing regional efforts and to make real international progress.

Broader efforts in the General Assembly should not be ignored either. As my colleague, the Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea, mentioned just a few moments ago, Australia and the Republic of Korea will once again be together sponsoring a draft resolution on preventing and combating illicit brokering at the Assembly's sixty-fifth session. The resolution encourages States to implement the domestic controls necessary to counter illicit trafficking, and also recognizes the key role of regional and subregional cooperation in countering that threat.

We believe that we all share the same goal. The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research identified it in the context of the arms trade treaty in its summary report on the regional seminar for countries in Central, Northern and Western Africa, but this goal is applicable across the entire arms-control agenda. The goal I refer to is working towards freeing people from fear. We look forward to working with other Member States to further advance this objective and the goals of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and of the arms trade treaty. The United Nations membership's continued and active support for these initiatives will send a strong message to would-be proliferators about the strength of international resolve to stop the illicit and irresponsible trade in conventional weapons, particularly small arms and light weapons. In doing so, we will be living up to our United Nations obligations to the maintenance of peace and security.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Central African Republic.

**Mr. Poukré-Kono** (Central African Republic) (*spoke in French*): I should like at the outset to convey to you, Mr. President, my warm congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for March, which you are conducting so skilfully. I would like to pay tribute to the welcome initiative of holding a public meeting on the topic of illicit arms trafficking and its impact on peace and security in the Central African subregion. I do so with pleasure, because Gabon is well known for its role as a mediator in Africa, and in the Central African Republic in particular for its involvement in the search for solutions to the Central African crisis. My delegation is grateful for all his efforts on the ground.

I am also grateful to the Deputy Secretary-General; the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Mr. Costa; the Secretary-General of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), Mr. Sylvain-Goma; and Mr. Duarte, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for their involvement in seeking solutions to the issue of small arms.

At a time when the international community has achieved notable progress in some parts of the world through its praiseworthy and courageous efforts to reduce if not to eradicate illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, which has led to so much loss of life, it is powerless to address that issue in the rest of the world, especially Africa and, more specifically, Central Africa. Many actions have been taken — including confiscation, collection and incineration — and yet all have amounted to a drop in the bucket. The circulation of small arms and light weapons has gone from bad to worse, sometimes thanks to public and international services.

The possible reasons for such failures include porous borders between neighbouring countries; a lack of defence and security capacity; a lack of trust among the population; the stockpiling of unneeded weapons; trafficking in natural resources, such as precious stones, elephant ivory and animal pelts; attempts at destabilization; and so forth. My delegation can only welcome the consideration of the topic at hand, since our country is emerging from conflict with difficulty in the face of constraints beyond its control, such as the

circulation of illicit weapons throughout our territory, held by rebel groups, bandits and road blockers.

There is no need to describe the effects of this scourge on the country's people and development. In 2003, the Government of the Central African Republic, in the context of its comprehensive defence policy, placed the individual at the centre of security issues and reaffirmed its firm commitment to peace and stability efforts in Central Africa and the Great Lakes region, for the security issue in the Central African Republic cannot be analysed without taking the regional perspective into account.

Since reducing the presence of arms is essential to development, a national programme to support development by strengthening security has been launched, based on an approach integrating community policies and the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process. Community policies are aimed at reducing insecurity through rehabilitation activities, post-crisis support to victims of such crises, and reducing the small arms and light weapons held illegally by civilians. DDR is aimed specifically at the ex-combatants who continue to pose a threat to civilian peace and security. We have to turn them from destructive forces to forces that can build the nation.

Consequently the restoration of security runs in tandem with civic responsibility and with DDR. From this point of view, the fight against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons is an issue not only of security but of human rights as well. A number of disarmament initiatives have been launched by the Government with the assistance of the international community, which in 2001 adopted the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, accompanied by concrete measures.

What is the result of all those recommendations? At the subregional level, the decisions of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa are sufficiently persuasive to endorse the initiatives taken at the subregional level. In fact, the member States of that Committee are on the verge of concluding the consideration of an advance draft legal instrument on the control, in Central Africa, of small arms and light weapons, their ammunition and all equipment that can be used for their manufacture. That instrument takes into account all aspects of arms from their manufacture to their sale in the markets. Moreover, it will strengthen comprehensive cooperation among Member States in the fight against the circulation of arms, transboundary crime, widespread banditry and so on.

At the national level, the Central African Republic has developed strategies that range from strengthening security cooperation with the neighbouring States to adopting laws, raising public awareness, establishing the Anti-Corruption Commission, training, and strengthening the national disarmament and reintegration programme, which was launched with the financial and technical support of the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in the Central African Republic. Because of the financing difficulties facing the Central African Republic, the implementation of such a programme requires mobilizing the financial resources of the State itself, which, unfortunately, it cannot do owing to the crisis in which it has been thrown.

To end the illicit sale of firearms, international partners should help the States of the Central African region by providing them with workable monitoring means and adequate logistical resources, that is, the requisite material means to eradicate the pandemic of small arms and light weapons in Central Africa, which means are lacking. As the States of the subregion are undertaking serious commitments on future binding legal instruments to control light weapons, the international community should help the subregion to achieve that objective.

My delegation fully associates itself with the draft presidential statement to be adopted at the conclusion of this meeting.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa.

**Mr. Paschalis** (South Africa): The Security Council has been considering the issue of small arms and light weapons during regular open debates since 1999, informed by the recognition that the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of small arms and light weapons has a direct bearing on the Security Council's mandate. Small arms and light weapons have the potential to increase the intensity and the duration of armed conflicts, undermine the sustainability of peace agreements, impede the success of peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction, frustrate efforts aimed at

the prevention of armed conflict, and hinder the provision of humanitarian assistance.

South Africa therefore congratulates the delegation of Gabon for taking up this important issue during its presidency of Security Council in order to, inter alia, promote international support for the efforts of the Central African countries to address a specific dynamic of this issue, namely, the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons in their region.

The issue of small arms and light weapons is complex and has a direct bearing on a number of other important policy areas, such as sustainable development, human rights, poverty and underdevelopment. It is, therefore, clear that that scourge requires attention at the national, subregional, regional and international levels in order for it to be effectively addressed. It also remains vitally important that each of the relevant United Nations organs afford the issue priority attention, based on their respective mandates and in cooperation with one another.

It is equally important for the international community, particularly the United Nations family, to render effective support to the home-grown solutions of regions and subregions, such as the Central African initiative. Legally binding agreements adopted at the subregional level represent concrete building blocks in the fight against the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons at the broader regional and global levels. In that regard, we may add that the Southern African Development Community (SADC) adopted the Protocol on the Control of Firearms, Ammunition and Other Related Materials in the Southern African Development Community Region in August 2001 as a comprehensive legally binding agreement aimed at preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, as well as at promoting greater cooperation amongst SADC member States, inter alia by enhancing and harmonizing national controls.

The United Nations Programme of Action on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons remains the central global instrument to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. The Programme of Action represents a hard-won agreement by the international community, and its full implementation in all its aspects should remain central to all our national, subregional, regional and international efforts.

With reference to the issues addressed today, we wish to underline the importance of the General Assembly as the custodian of the Programme of Action to further explore ways to advance the synergies between the Programme's provisions on cooperation, capacity-building and assistance, on the one hand, and regional and subregional initiatives, on the other hand.

The issue of small arms and light weapons has a particular bearing on two aspects of the Security Council's mandate, namely, arms embargoes, and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) efforts. Guided by our commitment to the peaceful resolution of conflicts, we support arms embargoes that contribute to lasting peace and stability, in this case also as it pertains to the Central African region.

Our involvement in peacekeeping operations led us to recognize the value of effective DDR activities as a vital element that contributes to the success of entire peace processes. The mandates of peacekeeping operations, handed down through Security Council resolutions, need to be backed up with the system-wide resources of the United Nations so as to ensure that such mandates are sufficiently sustainable and effectively carried out.

In conclusion, South Africa welcomes today's open debate as a further opportunity for the Council and the broader United Nations membership to develop and refine our common understanding of such issues in order to contribute concretely to the attainment of peace and security in the heart of Africa.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): Following consultations among the members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council:

> "The Security Council reaffirms the statements of its Presidents of 24 September 1999 (S/PRST/1999/28), 31 August 2001 (S/PRST/2001/21), 31 October 2002 (S/PRST/2002/30) and 29 June 2007 (S/PRST/2007/24), and its resolution 1209 (1998) of 19 November 1998, welcomes all initiatives taken by Member States following the adoption of the Programme of Action by the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and takes note of the progress towards an Arms Trade Treaty.

"The Security Council is gravely concerned about the illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons and their excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread in many regions of the world, particularly in the subregion of Central Africa, which have a wide range of humanitarian and socio-economic consequences, in particular on the security of civilians by fuelling armed conflict, which in turn exacerbates the risks of gender-based violence and the recruitment of child soldiers and poses a serious threat to peace, reconciliation, safety, security, stability and sustainable development at the local, national, regional and international levels.

"The Security Council, while acknowledging the right of all States to manufacture, import, export, transfer and retain conventional arms for self-defence and security needs consistent with international law and the Charter of the United Nations, underlines the vital importance of effective regulations and controls of the transparent trade in small arms and light weapons in order to prevent their illegal diversion and re-export.

"The Security Council reiterates that Member States should comply with existing arms embargoes and export bans and take necessary steps to effectively implement these measures imposed by the Council in its relevant resolutions.

"The Security Council is alarmed that illicit transfers of small arms and light weapons in contravention of arms embargoes and export bans, to or by criminal organizations or other irresponsible actors, including those suspected of engaging in terrorist acts, are linked with illicit trafficking of drugs, illegal exploitation of natural resources and illicit trade in such resources. The Security Council encourages all members that have not yet done so to accede to, ratify and implement the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its protocols, including the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition.

"The Security Council welcomes the various initiatives that are currently under way within the subregion, notes the efforts to establish a subregional register of small arms and encourages the Central African countries to take necessary measures to build up the capacity of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) through the establishment of a subregional register of arms dealers as well as the elaboration of a subregional legally binding instrument on the control of small arms and light weapons, their ammunitions and all equipments that might serve for their manufacture.

"The Security Council reaffirms the importance of addressing illicit arms trafficking, in particular of small arms and light weapons, through an approach of common and shared responsibility, and encourages the States of the subregion to fully implement relevant measures adopted at the national, subregional, regional and international levels and to consider appropriate steps in this regard.

"The Security Council calls on the States of the subregion to strengthen efforts to establish mechanisms and regional networks among their relevant authorities for information sharing to combat the illicit circulation of and trafficking in small arms and light weapons. The Council also stresses the need for the States of the subregion to strengthen their cooperation, including through regional and subregional organizations, in particular the African Union, in order to identify and take appropriate measures against individuals and entities that engage in illegal trafficking of small arms and light weapons in the Central African subregion.

"The Security Council emphasizes the need for national authorities in the subregion to fully participate in the practical implementation of the Programme of Action, adopted on 20 July 2001, by the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, adopted on 8 December 2005, and encourages Central African countries to regularly submit national reports to the Secretary-General, in accordance with the abovementioned instrument.

"The Security Council encourages Economic Community of Central African States to assist Central African countries in ensuring the effective implementation of arms embargoes imposed by the Council and, in this context, to establish measures such as inquiries into illicit arms trafficking routes, the follow-up of possible violations and cooperation in border monitoring, in consultation with the countries concerned. In this regard, the Security Council encourages the committees in charge of monitoring arms embargoes in Central African countries and neighbouring countries, consistent with their mandates, to continue to include in the annual reports a substantive section on the implementation of arms embargoes, on possible violation of the measures reported to the Committees and with recommendations, as appropriate, for strengthening the effectiveness of arms embargoes. This information could also be shared with Interpol's International Weapons and Explosives Tracking System.

"The Security Council encourages the Committees in charge of monitoring arms embargoes in Central African countries and neighbouring countries, consistent with their mandates, to establish channels of communication with ECCAS, its member States and the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa.

"The Security Council supports the action of the United Nations missions present in the subregion, consistent with their mandates, to assist disarmament processes in the framework of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes, and calls upon international partners to assist the Central African countries to build and strengthen their capacities to set up and implement measures relating to the prevention of illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons, and the security and management of stockpiles of arms, especially small arms and light weapons.

"The Security Council recognizes the importance of the forthcoming United Nations Fourth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects, to be held in June 2010, and encourages Member States, including those in the subregion of Central Africa, to fully cooperate with the Chair to ensure a successful outcome of this Meeting.

"The Security Council encourages Member States to undertake vigorous actions aimed at restricting the supply of small arms and light weapons and ammunitions to areas of instability in Central Africa.

"The Security Council requests the Secretary-General to take into account in his biennial report, as a follow-up, the content of the present presidential statement."

This statement will be issued as a Security Council document under the symbol S/PRST/2010/6.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

*The meeting rose at 4.50 p.m.*